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Editors' Notes

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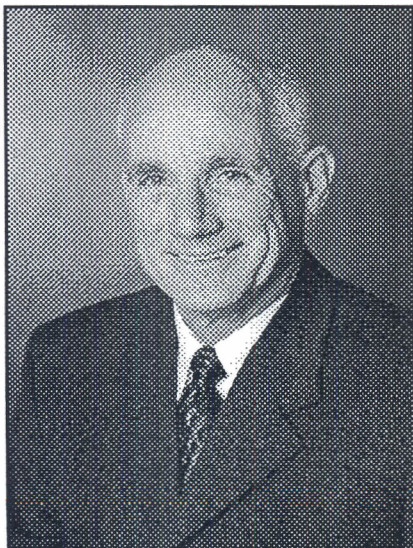
Editors' Notes

D'ESTA LOVE AND STUART LOVE

This issue of *Leaven* was inspired by a project devoted to the development of a theological understanding of vocation. Pepperdine University and several other universities are participating in this project, which is funded by the Lilly Endowment. Because one of the implications of this project is that the church will be enriched as individuals discern and answer the call of God for their lives, your editors thought it would be of interest to bring the conversation regarding vocation to our readers.

We asked Rick Marrs to edit the issue because, as a member of the grant proposal committee, he contributed a theological rationale for the project and is well acquainted with it. We thank Dr. Marrs for his own sense of calling to help us bring theological reflection to ministry and his willingness to edit this issue. What follows is his introduction of the topic and of those who contributed to this reflection on God's call for our lives.

Finally, we are saddened to announce the passing of Charles H. Gresham, a member of *Leaven's* advisory board. Dr. Gresham taught at Kentucky Christian College for a number of years. Your editors remember meeting him for the first time at the 1997 North American Christian Convention. From the beginning, he was eager to support our efforts to communicate themes of Christian ministry to readers of the Stone-Campbell Restoration heritage. He is missed by all of us at *Leaven*! But we are thankful for the time we worked together. May God's richest blessings be upon his family.



Recently, Pepperdine University received a generous grant from the Lilly Endowment. This grant focuses on helping students think of their future in terms of "vocation." Although the term vocation often conjures up images of technical schools and mundane work, this grant explores the classical meaning of vocation as "calling from God."

The grant allows Pepperdine to explore in a multitude of ways the integration of our life of faith and calling from God with our daily life activities (in the workplace, home, and community). Because of the rich discussion that occurred during the writing of the grant and the wonderful insights that resulted from this endeavor, we thought it valuable to devote an issue of *Leaven* to this topic. Since we all are "called by God" and must think deeply about the integration of our relationship with God and our daily lives, this subject remains perennially relevant. This issue explores our God-given vocation from a variety of perspectives.

The early articles reflect on vocation from a variety of biblical perspectives. I begin with a discussion of vocation from an Old Testament perspective. **Stuart Love** follows with a reflection on vocation from a New Testament perspective, specifically the theology of vocation articulated in 1 Pet 2:4-10. **Jim Street** continues Stuart's emphasis on the importance of vocation for the community of faith by addressing in practical ways the interaction of vocation, gifts, and talents. **Carl Flynn** follows with a view of vocation from a Trinitarian perspective. **Darryl Tippens** addresses the nature of vocation as choice, listening, and costliness. **Richard Hughes** continues that discussion in his article on the dual nature of vocation as hearing the call of God within the call of the gospel. Only by placing our vocation within the larger context of the gospel call will we avoid the danger of narcissistic self-reflection.

Cliff Barbarick and **Ezra Plank**, two graduate students in religion at Pepperdine, offer stimulating and insightful self-reflections on the call of God in their own lives. They are followed by a most helpful annotated bibliography on the subject of vocation by **Don Thompson** and **Cindy Miller-Perrin**. This analysis and assessment of the most valuable resources in this area should prove most useful for those wanting to further explore God's calling. We also include a marvelous worship meditation by **Lee Magness**.

We hope this topic will prove as stimulating and spiritually enriching for you and your communities of faith as it has for those of us who have engaged this topic in a university setting. May God bless you as you consider again your calling from God.

